



## 5.0 SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Socioeconomic data for Parker and the surrounding area (La Paz, Yuma, and Mohave Counties) provide essential input regarding the type and volume of future airport and aviation activity which may be anticipated in the area. Key socioeconomic factors investigated include: demography, employment, economic base, income retail sales, and regional access. For comparison, statistical data for the Arizona FAA Western Region (consisting of California, Arizona, and Nevada) and the United States is also provided.

### 5.1 DEMOGRAPHY

According to the 1980 census, Arizona is ranked twenty-ninth in the nation in total population (see Table 5-1), but is ranked second in the nation behind Nevada for population increase between 1970 and 1980. Projections for the years 1990 and 2000 predict a decrease in the growth rate for Arizona, the FAA Western Region and the United States as a whole.

In 1980, the combined regional population of Mohave, Yuma, and La Paz Counties was determined to be 146,419 by the United States Bureau of the Census--a 69-percent increase since 1970. This represented a growth rate of 54 percent over the 10-year period. The relative increase was greater in Mohave County (116 percent) than in Yuma County, which at the time included the area to be established as La Paz County (49 percent). The mid-year estimate for 1984 by the Arizona Department of Economic Security indicates the regional level of population at 156,100--a 6.7-percent increase in the 4-year period since the census; this annual growth rate of 1.5 indicates a substantial reduction in population growth since 1980.

The census indicated that three cities and towns in the 3-county region (Lake Havasu City, Somerton and San Luis) more than doubled in population between 1970 and 1980. These increases were applied to relatively low population bases. According to latest estimates at mid-year 1984,

Table 5-1. Population Trends 1970 to 2000

Area	1970	1980	1985	1990	2000	Percent Increase 1970-1985	Percent Increase 1985-2000
Parker	1,948	2,542	2,650	2,750	2,950	36.0	11.3
La Paz County	*	12,557	13,300	14,310	15,705	--	18.1
La Paz, Mohave, Yuma	86,684	146,419	159,000	174,900	213,000	83.4	34.0
<u>Region</u>							
Arizona	1,770,990	2,718,215	3,183,100	3,710,200	4,751,900	79.4	49.3
FAA Western Region	22,212,862	27,171,323	29,967,700	32,764,078	37,538,589	34.9	25.3
United States	203,302,031	226,545,805	234,412,402	242,279,000	259,845,000	15.3	10.8

\*La Paz County was established from a portion of Yuma County in 1983.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1970, 1980.  
Valley National Bank, Arizona Statistical Review, 1983, 1984.  
District IV Council of Governments, 1984.  
RS&H, 1985.

the largest population centers are Yuma (46,300), Lake Havasu City (17,125), Bullhead City (12,545) and Kingman (10,100). Four Indian tribes (Cocopah, Colorado River, Fort Mohave, and Hualapai) reside in the 3-county region, for a combined regional Indian population of 5,100 (Arizona Commission of Indian Affairs, 1983).

The Town of Parker is located in the northwestern portion of La Paz County on the Colorado River. Parker's population increased by 33.8 percent between 1970 and 1980, by 4.2 percent between 1980 and 1985, and is expected to increase by 11.3 percent between 1985 and 2000. La Paz County is expected to increase by 18.1 percent between 1985 and 2000. Statistics for La Paz County are not available before 1980 because it was not established until January 1, 1983. However La Paz County is considered a rural area, with a population density of 3 persons per square mile and just over 5,100 homes for the entire county. Housing statistics for 1980 reflect the increased growth in population between 1970 and 1980. During this period, Arizona experienced a 77.5-percent increase in dwelling units, while Parker experienced a 34.7-percent increase.

Table 5-2 represents demographic characteristics of Parker, La Paz, Mohave, and Yuma Counties, Arizona, the FAA Western Region and the U.S. The table indicates that Parker had the lowest increase in population growth in the study area between 1970 and 1980. It also shows that Parker has the highest percentage of individuals under 18 years old and the lowest percentage over the age of 65.

As a result, Parker also has the lowest median age of 25.9 compared to the 32.4 of the La Paz, Mohave, and Yuma Region and the 29.2 of the State of Arizona. Parker exhibited the highest fertility rate compared to the other two areas, and shows a larger family size in persons per household for 1980.

Table 5-2. Demographic Characteristics - 1980

Demographic Category	Measure	Parker	La Paz County*	3-County Region	Arizona	FAA Western Region	Unites States
Size	Total Population	2,542	12,557	146,419	2,718,215	27,171,323	226,545,805
Growth	Percent Change of Population 1970-1980	30.5	—	68.9	53.5	22.3	11.5
Fertility	Fertility Rate	4.14	—	3.13	3.11	2.81	—
Family Size	Persons Per Household	2.86	—	2.80	2.79	2.68	2.75
Ethnic Background	Percent of Population of Spanish Origin	19.2	—	16.6	16.2	18.4	6.4
Ethnic Background	Percent of Population Black	2.3	—	1.4	2.8	7.2	11.7
Age	Percent Under 18 Years Old	34.7	—	28.9	29.1	27.0	28.1
Age	Percent 18 to 64 Years Old	57.8	—	57.9	59.6	62.7	60.6
Age	Percent 65 Years Old and Over	7.5	—	13.2	11.3	10.3	11.3
Age	Median Age	25.9	—	32.4	29.2	29.8	30.0
Sex	Percent Female	62.3	—	59.3	50.7	50.3	51.4

\* Characteristics for La Paz County incomplete due to establishment in 1983.

Sources: District IV Council of Governments, 1984.  
 U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980.  
 RS&H, 1985.

Persons of Spanish and American Indian origins represent the largest minority groups in the FAA Western Region--18.4 percent compared with 6.4 percent for the U.S. According to the 1980 census, persons of Spanish and American Indian origin represent 19.2 percent of the total population in Parker and 16.6 percent of the 3-county region. Also there is a higher percentage of women in Parker and the 3-county region than is found in the FAA Western Region and the national average.

## 5.2 EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC BASE

On January 1, 1983, La Paz County was established from the northern portion of Yuma County. The economics of both counties, as well as Mohave County, are linked by their proximity to the Colorado River. The river is located inside a horseshoe of five metropolitan areas, all within a half-day's drive or less: San Diego and Los Angeles to the west; Las Vegas to the north; and Phoenix and Tucson to the east. This area has become a primary attraction for retirement, second-home and tourist activity. A major boost in tourism occurred in the mid-to-late 1970's when energy prices forced the populations of nearby metropolitan areas to opt for vacations close to home.

A review of the major economic activities of the 10 largest cities, towns and unincorporated areas in the 3-county region reveals that tourism and recreation rank at the top of the list followed closely by agriculture. Other economic activities include retirement, trade, services, government and manufacturing.

La Paz County shares many of the economic problems faced by other rural areas in Arizona. Physically remote from the state's metropolitan labor markets, the county's economic base consists of tourist-related services, trade and government. Although the La Paz unemployment rate was 9.9 percent in July 1984, the improvement from the 1983 average of 17 percent is significant.

While employment in services has grown moderately in 1984, the level in recreational activities in the Colorado River Valley has been somewhat lower than expected. Expected increases in demand for overall recreation and water sports in western Arizona and southeastern California will be the source of future economic growth in La Paz County. Most jobs will be in service- and trade-related, entry-level occupations.

County and tribal governments in Parker will be the primary source of jobs for secretaries, clerks and office workers. In addition to serving as the seat of government, Parker is the center of commercial and recreational activities in La Paz County. Business in the area will have some openings for cashiers and food service workers.

Parker's economy is based primarily on retail trade and services (Table 5-3). The 11-mile strip of the Colorado River, contained between Parker Dam and Headgate Rock Dam, forms one of the finest bodies of water in the country for water-related recreational activities, which makes Parker a popular destination for tourists and winter visitors. Motels, campgrounds, mobile home, RV parks, restaurants, gasoline stations and convenience stores serve both the winter and summer visitor. Parker's tourist industry is operational year-round, with a very significant drop in business during the last 2 weeks of August. The winter season begins in mid-October and ends in May. Many winter tourists will reside in Parker for periods of 5 to 6 months. Most of the winter vacationers consist of retired persons from the northern states who are traveling in trailers and recreational vehicles. To accommodate these visitors, the Town of Parker provides 4,000 rental spaces in Mobile Home and RV parks.

The summer vacationer does not stay in Parker for extended periods of time. Most of the vacationers remain for a maximum of 2 weeks, and these persons take advantage of the water-related recreational activities Parker has to offer. The motels in Parker become an

Table 5-3. Employment by Industry - 1980

Industry	Parker	Percent	La Paz* County	Percent	3-County Region	Percent	Arizona	Percent	FAA Western Region	Percent	United States	Percent
Agricultural Services Forestry, Fisheries	103	10.7	—	—	5,286	10.2	32,791	3.0	391,090	3.3	2,913,589	2.2
Mining	†	†	—	—	853	1.6	26,605	2.4	75,063	0.6	1,028,178	0.8
Construction	74	7.7	—	—	4,740	9.1	90,381	8.1	547,581	4.7	5,739,598	4.4
Manufacturing	11	1.2	—	—	4,829	9.3	161,302	14.5	2,190,751	18.8	35,393,965	27.1
Transportation and Other Public Utilities	35	3.6	—	—	3,681	7.1	73,779	6.6	647,520	5.5	7,087,455	5.4
Wholesale/Retail Trade	222	23.0	—	—	11,429	22.1	246,094	22.1	2,582,740	22.2	19,933,926	15.2
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	72	7.5	—	—	2,368	4.6	77,266	7.0	722,855	6.2	5,898,059	4.5
Services	308	31.9	—	—	13,683	26.4	332,072	30.0	2,655,905	22.7	47,788,149	36.5
Public Administration	140	14.4	—	—	4,977	9.6	72,980	6.3	1,859,852	16.0	5,147,466	3.9
TOTAL	965	100.0	—	—	51,846	100.0	1,113,270	100.0	11,673,357	100.0	130,930,385	100.0

\* Characteristics not available for La Paz County because county was not established until 1983.

† Mining statistics combined with Agricultural Services, Forestry, and Fisheries.

Sources: Arizona Department of Commerce, 1985.  
U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1980.  
RS&H, 1985.



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important part of the summer tourist industry. At the present time, Parker has 23 motels with a total of 400 units. On the weekends and special holidays, the motels are 90 to 100 percent full; during the week they are 80 percent full. During the summer season, many of the vacationers are from the California area, particularly Los Angeles and Orange County; many of these vacationers have mobile homes and cabins in Parker. In addition, the summer vacationers take advantage of Parker's Airport. Parker also serves as the trade center for the Colorado River Indian Reservation and several small towns along the Colorado River.

Historically, agriculture has been the major economic base for Parker and CRIT. The fertile river bottom lands and available water are employed extensively in irrigated agriculture producing cotton, alfalfa, wheat, feed grains, lettuce and melons. Approximately 78,000 acres are now under cultivation. The 100,000-acre Colorado River Indian Reservation has been guaranteed water for irrigation by the U.S. Supreme Court. The tribe operates small farms, but also leases much of their land to large corporate farms.

Light industrial activity is expanding on the reservation. CRIT's Industrial Park is fully improved with highway access, paved streets, and complete utilities. The park now has two tenants and the tribes are actively seeking and providing assistance to other interested firms.

Major changes in employment have occurred in the region in the past 10 years. While all industries have shown employment gains in absolute numbers, certain industries gained while others lost relative employment shares. Substantial relative gains were made in trade, manufacturing and finance, insurance, and real estate. Losses were posted by mining, construction, and government. Employment in agriculture, transportation, communications and public utilities remained relatively unchanged.

Hotel and resort operators will continue to expand their operations to take advantage of Arizona's business growth, as well as higher levels of tourist activity. The year 1984 showed mixed results; the winter season was very strong while the summer season was slower than expected. The continued strength of the national economy and stability in world currency markets should encourage enough American and foreign visitors to make 1985 and 1986 very promising for tourism-related business.

As of June 1984, the regional labor force was 62,000, of which 8,775 were unemployed, resulting in an unemployment rate of 14.2 percent. Within the state, this rate was exceeded only by the Apache-Navajo region at 14.7 percent. The unemployment rate for each county in the 3-county region exceeds the national rate of 7.1 percent and the Arizona State rate of 5.0 percent; unemployment in Yuma County (17.8 percent) was more than double that in Mohave County (8.5 percent), and La Paz County had an unemployment rate of 10.9 percent.

In general, the Arizona economy in 1984 continued the recovery that began in 1983 and entered a period of rapid expansion. More than 6,000 jobs per month have been created during a year of growth which is unmatched since 1979. The July 1984 unemployment rate of 4.7 percent was the lowest recorded in Arizona since May 1979. Record employment levels were reached in manufacturing, construction, services, government, finance, insurance, and real estate. Arizona's economic performance is even more remarkable in light of the depressed state of the copper industry. In the past, rapid growth has coincided with brisk hiring activity at the mines and smelters. While mining activity is expected to remain at low levels for several years to come, Arizona is expected to enjoy strong employment through 1985 and beyond.

The largest volume of new jobs will be created in service and trade industries. Manufacturing continues to be surprisingly strong; employment in this sector has increased by about 8 percent on an annual basis. Most of the new employment openings will be created by high-technology and military equipment manufacturers in the metropolitan Counties of

Puma and Maricopa. Business services have enjoyed an unprecedented boom in Arizona during the last year, reflecting the increased activity of the Phoenix and Tucson area economies. Finance, insurance and real estate services have also provided increasing numbers of job opportunities. As the state's major cities grow in importance as regional centers of commerce, the full range of business and financial services should experience steady growth.

Retail trade employment, particularly in eating and drinking establishments, grew rapidly in 1984. The outlook for population and personal income growth in Arizona indicates that most areas of the state will have increasing numbers of jobs in the retail trade sector during the next two years.

Government will add jobs in 1985 and 1986, but not in numbers commensurate with Arizona's rate of economic growth. Limited budget resources at the federal, state and local levels will keep the rate of employment growth in government in the 2-percent to 2.5-percent range in 1985 and 1986. The outlook for the nonmetropolitan counties will have moderate employment growth similar to the period prior to the 1981-82 recession.

### 5.3 INCOME

Table 5-4 represents the effective buying income for La Paz County, the La Paz-Mohave-Yuma County Region, FAA Western Region, and the United States. As Table 5-4 indicates, the per capita income and per household income for La Paz County is much lower than for the State of Arizona, the FAA Western Region, and the United States. This can be attributed to the dependence of the Parker economy on the tourism industry and the lack of substantial employment in the manufacturing industry. The problem with an economy dependent on tourism is the large fluctuation in business activity during the year. The Town of Parker and CRIT are actively seeking to diversify their economic industrial base by seeking employers to locate in CRIT's Industrial Park.

Table 5-4. Effective Buying Income

	Year				Percentage Increase		
	1972	1977	1982	1987	1972-1977	1977-1982	1982-1987
<u>La Paz County</u>							
Personal Effective Buying Income (\$000)	*	*	\$83,823	\$165,379	*	*	97.3
Per Capita Income			6,209	9,963	*	*	60.5
Per Household Income			16,436	25,443	*	*	54.8
<u>La Paz, Mohave, Yuma County Region</u>							
Personal Effective Buying Income (\$000)	\$317,579	\$536,443	\$1,150,081	\$2,237,387	68.9	114.4	94.5
Per Capita Income	3,250	4,747	7,134	10,769	46.1	50.3	50.9
Per Household Income	7,333	14,043	19,693	28,418	91.5	40.2	44.3
<u>Arizona</u>							
Personal Effective Buying Income (\$000)	\$7,150,536	\$12,620,259	\$25,128,299	\$46,366,538	76.5	99.1	84.5
Per Capita Income	3,596	5,396	8,452	13,347	50.0	56.6	57.9
Per Household Income	11,346	13,748	20,097	36,252	21.2	46.1	80.4
<u>FAA Western Region</u>							
Personal Effective Buying Income (\$000)	\$96,505,805	\$163,322,505	\$295,871,617	\$517,279,674	69.2	81.2	74.8
Per Capita Income	4,030	6,252	9,655	15,827	55.1	54.4	63.9
Per Household Income	12,054	15,302	22,159	40,242	27.0	44.8	81.6
<u>United States</u>							
Personal Effective Buying Income (\$000)	\$791,506,134	\$1,303,586,705	\$2,169,679,437	\$3,722,861,163	64.7	66.4	71.6
Per Capita Income	3,779	5,986	9,300	15,124	58.4	55.4	62.6
Per Household Income	8,605	17,327	25,507	41,264	101.4	47.2	61.8

\* La Paz County was not established until 1983.

Sources: Survey of Buying Power, Sales and Marketing Management, 1983.  
Survey of Buying Power, Sales and Marketing Management, 1978.  
Survey of Buying Power, Sales Management, 1973.  
RS&H, 1985.

In terms of employment earnings, mining activities in Mohave County lead the 3-county wage spectrum with an average of \$492 per week based on wages paid during the fourth quarter of 1983. These are followed by a weekly wage of \$475 for federal government workers in Mohave County; \$425 for workers in transportation, communications and public utilities in Yuma County; and \$419 for federal government workers in La Paz County. Wages are lowest in agriculture in Yuma County and in retail trade for the entire region with a range of \$175 to \$190 per week. The total payroll for the region last year approached \$650 million in 1983 for an average weekly wage among all employees of \$255.

#### 5.4 RETAIL SALES

The retail trade industry in Arizona has exhibited some spectacular growth in the past 2 decades, much of which is attributable to population increases and inflation. The impact of inflation has diminished in recent years, while population growth has accelerated. Retail trade sales in the region (Mohave, La Paz, Yuma Counties) based on the first 5 months of 1984, showed a 13-percent increase on a volume of \$448,000,000.

This percentage gain in retail trade sales leads the state in terms of relative growth. The gain compares to the June 1983 through May 1984 period when the increase was 17.8 percent. The figure translates into substantial gains in real terms after adjusting for relatively low inflation and population growth. The reasons for these gains are a reflection of the increased tourism which benefited the region, and a return to the marketplace by the local population to satisfy pent-up demand for goods not purchased during the recent recession.

Table 5-5 presents the retail sales of La Paz County, the La Paz-Mohave-Yuma County Region, Arizona, FAA Western Region, and the United States for the years 1972, 1977, 1982, and projected 1987 retail sales. Although the percentage gains are considerable, retail sales per capita and per household in the 3-county region are significantly lower than

Table 5-5. Retail Sales

	Year				Percentage Increase		
	1972	1977	1982	1987	1972-1977	1977-1982	1982-1987
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<u>La Paz County</u>							
Total Retail Sales (\$000)	*	*	23,023	43,748	*	*	90.0
Per Capita Retail Sales			1,705	2,635	*	*	54.5
Per Household Retail Sales			4,514	6,730	*	*	49.1
 <u>La Paz, Mohave, Yuma County Region</u>							
Total Retail Sales (\$000)	222,602	426,477	623,751	1,164,911	91.6	46.3	86.8
Per Capita Retail Sales	2,278	3,774	3,869	4,878	65.7	2.5	26.1
Per Household Retail Sales	7,250	11,164	10,681	13,004	54.0	-4.3	21.8
 <u>Arizona</u>							
Total Retail Sales (\$000)	4,792,768	8,109,716	12,623,047	22,236,574	69.2	55.6	76.2
Per Capita Retail Sales	2,410	3,467	4,246	6,401	44.0	22.5	50.7
Per Household Retail Sales	7,605	10,170	11,674	17,386	33.7	14.8	48.9
 <u>FAA Western Region</u>							
Total Retail Sales (\$000)	53,253,092	91,926,553	143,831,776	249,097,251	72.6	56.5	73.2
Per Capita Retail Sales	2,532	3,715	4,999	8,226	46.7	34.6	65.2
Per Household Retail Sales	7,587	10,372	13,782	21,554	36.7	32.9	56.4
 <u>United States</u>							
Total Retail Sales (\$000)	443,695,884	724,139,211	1,100,749,749	1,869,972,802	63.2	52.0	69.9
Per Capita Retail Sales	2,118	3,325	4,718	7,597	57.0	41.9	61.0
Per Household Retail Sales	6,513	9,625	12,940	20,727	47.8	34.4	60.2

\* La Paz County was not established until 1983.

Sources: Survey of Buying Power, Sales and Marketing Management, 1983.  
Survey of Buying Power, Sales and Marketing Management, 1978.  
Survey of Buying Power, Sales Management, 1973.  
RS&H, 1985.

the State, FAA Western Region and U.S. Statistics. The 1987 projection forecasts low per capita and per household sales for La Paz County.

#### 5.5 REGIONAL ACCESSIBILITY

Parker is located on the Colorado River approximately 115 miles north-east of Yuma along the California, Arizona State border. Parker is accessed by State Highway 95 in Arizona and State Road 62 in California. State Highway 95 is approximately 20 miles west of Parker. Interstate 10 is approximately 35 miles south of Parker and links Parker with Phoenix to the east and Los Angeles to the west. State Highway 95 links Parker with Las Vegas to the north, and Yuma to the southwest. Overall there are only two north/south roads (State Highway 95 and U.S. 93) and three east/west roads (I-40, I-10, and I-8) that provide access to Parker within a 100-mile radius.